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ABSTRACT

West Virginia's school improvement plan, emphasizing learning outcomes, mandates excellent education for all students. Following an executive summary, this paper discusses, first, the conflict between excellence and equity in educational reform, and West Virginia's intent to resolve that conflict; second, the legal foundations of the master plan, chiefly a state supreme court decision requiring extensive change in West Virginia schools; third, the plan itself; an finally, a strategy for effecting the plan. The master plan as described here includes (1) a new K-12 curriculum that incorporates heightened academic standards and is designed to foster adaptability and lifelong learning; (2) improvements in time management, instructional materials, testing, teacher education, and staff development, to support the instructional program; and (3) program and school improvement processes, accountability measures, and a management information system. A description of these components follows an explanation of the plan's emphasis on student achievement; detailed tables of the proposed curriculum are included. The final section describes a five-year implementation strategy based on local prioritization and scheduling of statewide objectives. (MCG)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

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A system for improving teaching, learning and schooling, clearly articulating goals leading to carefully selected program and school improvements, and appropriate staff development is evolving in West Virginia. It is bringing the schools closer to the image of what they should be; a comprehensive system focused on learning.

This paper presents West Virginia's strategy to improve schooling. It explains the theoretical and legal underpinnings of the State's Master Plan for Educational Excellence. And, it describes local and State roles in moving the Plan from paper to practice. The Plan is a legacy of excellence. It has the potential for more global impact on West Virginia education than PL 94-142 had nationally.

The Plan's organizing theme is that learning is the business of education and educational decisions should be made in this context. It requires that all educational programs and services required by an excellent system of education are available to all students. It identifies and describes the following elements of an excellent system of education:

1. high quality educational and support programs that dictate a set of core learning outcomes supporting adaptability and life long learning;

2. required administrative and instructional practices, personnel, facilities, and instructional materials, supplies and equipment to deliver such programs and services; and

3. accountability measures needed to assure the public that a thorough and efficient system of education is being provided students enrolled in the public schools of West Virginia.

Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 26, 1984.

EA 017 229

To improve schooling, many people think freedom is the key to excellence, decentralization and deregulation are essential to educational reform and producing a distinct identity. Others disagree. They feel improving schools must have both announced expectations from top level leadership and organization for improvement at the local level. Their focus is not on management or teachers, but on the development of partnership for excellence. West Virginia's school improvement model follows this latter line of thought. It employs 1) a top down shared vision of excellence, 2) a bottom up process allowing local determination of the prioritization and pace of implementation in accordance with available resources, and 3) an accountability system to determine the extent to which the vision of excellence is being implemented in every county for every student.

West Virginia's school improvement model can be contrasted with improvement strategies attempting to verify the effectiveness of individual programs and disseminate them without a support base or follow-up activities to sustain them. Such a system relies on practitioners seeing the value of such programs and continuing to use them. The West Virginia system operates differently. It emphasizes a long-term approach to school improvement; concentrating on substance and process in the search for excellence. The system suggests that the responsibility for improving the quality of schools resides in a combination of responsible parties acting together at the state and local levels. It is an attempt to find a systematic way to take what is known about teaching, learning and schooling and then put people together in a partnership to improve education.

The partners have different roles. At the State level, the school improvement processes described herein requires the State Board and Department to 1) define high quality programs and services to be delivered to all

students, 2) assure that it is delivered, and 3) build the capacity of those charged with the responsibility to reach the defined outcomes.

At the local level, the school improvement processe described herein initially seek progress not perfection. It requires 1) principal and staff assessment against the shared definition of excellence, 2) the development of school and program priorities for improvement and submitting those to county boards of education, and 3) annual county prioritization of improvements based on available funds to create the continuous progress towards an excellent education for every child. Using this scheme, if funding increases, the process moves rapidly. If funding is stable, the process moves slowly. Either way, West Virginia's educational system will move towards excellence!

A LEGACY OF EXCELLENCE

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Educational policy has been dominated by twin underlying goals of equity and excellence for many decades. Commonly, it is believed that an emphasis on equity is characterized by the pursuit of minimum standards describing adequacy rather than excellence; leveling down to accommodate all learners; restricting the mission of the public schools to instruction in basic skills; narrowing the number of programs offered and resulting in an accommodation of mediocrity. On the other hand, an emphasis on excellence is characterized by setting high expectations and goals for all learners, preparing students through education to respond to a rapidly changing world rather than helping a privileged few which widens the performance gap between student groups resulting in exclusionary and discriminatory actions and undemocratic elitism.

Historically, the equity/excellence debate has generally been conducted on financial issues. The financial focus of the debate has several results. For example, some feel that excellence for all is unachievable financially, therefore cannot be legislated. And, even if achievable, increased state or federal funding would lead to more external controls placed on the funds use and ultimately to state or even federal control. On the other hand, equity defined as adequacy is believed to be achievable financially and therefore can be legislated. The practical result of this position is maintenance of the concept of local control.

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[1]The views presented are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Department or the State Board of Education.

Presented at the American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, April 26, 1984.

Therefore, focusing on equity/excellence in terms of financial issues always tilts the emphasis in the direction of equity. In fact, rarely have policies related to excellence in curriculum and teaching ever influenced the design of funding systems to accommodate a tilt towards excellence. Therefore, some observers believe that if excellence is to be achieved, the equity/excellence goals cannot be couched in financial terms. They contend that excellence may cost money, but additional money is not the only road to excellence. Thus, reform of the process of schooling may also be prerequisite to achieving excellence. Simply, more may require more, but also required is doing more with less.

Those issues were considered by the National Commission on Education. In 1983, they reported that the twin goals of equity and excellence have profound and practical meaning for our economy and society and one cannot be permitted to yield to the other, either in principle or practice. To do so would deny young people their chance to learn and live according to their aspirations and abilities.[2] Yet, a review of the recent national reports leads to the following conclusions: 1) there has been a uniform tilt towards mediocrity in our educational system, 2) there is confidence that something can be done about our schools, 3) equity and excellence are achievable by the long-term focus on excellence, 4) excellence is achievable by focusing on changes in the structural components of content, time, teaching; the relationship of expectations and leadership, 5) the school should be the focus of reform and accountability, 6) a guarantee of equal access to excellence must be provided, and 7) the twin goals of equity and excellence must equate at the classroom, not the courthouse.

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[2]National Commission of Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1983), p. 13.

Uniformally missing from the reports are strategies by which education can move from where it is to where reformers would like it to be. The reports offer a sketch of excellence, a set of ideas about the goals of education, and conditions that are intolerable. They leave to the states, districts and schools the jobs of 1) reexamining and defining excellence, 2) achieving the consensus and understanding of those with a vested interest in the final outcomes, 3) achieving the support of authorities in the governors' mansions and legislatures, and 4) building bridges and roads that the reforms will travel.

In 1982, one year before the national reports, the West Virginia Board of Education focused its long term search for excellence by addressing the equity/excellence goals through the adoption of the West Virginia Master Plan for Public Education (Plan hereafter). The national attention has spurred and supported the Plan's acceptance. Through the Plan, West Virginia envisions providing every child an equal opportunity for a high quality education no matter where they reside in the State. Simply, the Plan requires that excellence be defined and funds appropriated to pursue it efficently. Therefore, the Plan also establishes research based proposals to reform the processes of teaching, learning and administering .

This paper traces the search for excellence in West Virginia public education from national goals of equity and excellence, through the impetus provided by the courts to develop a master plan defining educational excellence and finally to the school improvement strategies designed to move the plan from paper to practice. The paper does not address initiatives already in place such as a statewide educational fund, "C" average for extracurricular participation and increased graduation requirements.

THE LEGAL FOUNDATION

Although West Virginia's Plan was developed before the national focus on education reform, it was not accomplished without an external stimulus. West Virginia had searched for excellence for many years and with different reforms and uneven results. In 1975 the search was brought in sharp focus when the parents of five Lincoln County West Virginia children filed for declaratory judgment in the Circuit Court of Kanawha County on behalf of themselves and as a class action on behalf of all other school children in the Lincoln County school district.[3] The plaintiffs alleged that the state's system of financing the public schools violated the West Virginia Constitution by denying the plaintiffs a thorough and efficient education and equal protection of the laws resulting from discriminatory classifications found in the educational financing system. Allegedly, inequities existed because funding, facilities, curriculum, personnel and property values in poor counties were markedly less when compared to more wealthy counties in the state. The Kanawha County Circuit Court dismissed the complaint noting that although state government had not created a thorough and efficient system of public schools in Lincoln County, it had met this constitutional mandate in some counties.

On February 20, 1979, the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals reversed the decision and remanded the case to the lower court for further evidentiary development. The Supreme Court of Appeals provided the lower court the following guidelines:

1. Education is a fundamental constitutional right in West Virginia. Therefore, because of the equal protection clause any discriminatory classification found in the educational financing system cannot stand unless the state can demonstrate a compelling state interest.

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[3]Pauley et al. v. Kelly et al. (Circuit Court, Kanawha County, West Virginia), Civil Number _____, Filed 1975.

2. The thorough and efficient clause requires the legislature to develop a high quality system of education, including high quality standards.

3. A thorough and efficient system of education is one that develops as the best state of education expertise allows, the minds, bodies and social morality of its charges, prepares them for useful and happy occupations, recreation and citizenship and does so economically.

4. The legally recognized elements in this definition are the development in every child to his or her capacity of a) literacy, b) mathematics, c) knowledge of government, d) self-knowledge and knowledge of the total environment, e) work training and advanced academic training, f) recreational pursuits, g) interest in all creative arts, and h) social ethics. Also implicit in this definition are supportive services, physical facilities, instructional materials and personnel, and careful state and local supervision to prevent waste and monitor pupil/teacher competency.

5. The West Virginia Constitution makes education's funding second in priority only to payment of the state debt and ahead of every other state function. The Constitution manifests throughout the people's clear mandate to the legislature that public education is a prime function of state government.

6. The existing educational system must be tested in part by high quality educational standards to be determined by the lower court. If these standards are not currently being met it must be ascertained that this failure is not the result of inefficiency or a failure to follow existing school statutes.[4]

In essence, the West Virginia Supreme Court reinforced the equity/excellence goals, but placed the emphasis on excellence by 1) defining high quality standards to test the West Virginia educational system and affirming that these high quality standards must be available to all students to their capacity and 2) using this description of excellence to influence the development of a funding system to accommodate equal access to an education of high quality. With this conceptual scheme, the West Virginia courts became one of the few authoritative bodies to declare that a description of excellence should drive financing formulas.

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[4]Pauley et al. v. Kelly, West Virginia _____, 255 S. E. 2d 859 (1979).

In 1980, the Honorable Arthur M. Recht was appointed by the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals to the Kanawha County Circuit Court to conduct a nonjury trial. On May 11, 1982, after 40 days of expert testimony, Judge Recht developed high quality standards, tested the present West Virginia education system and held the following:

1. That the system of financing public schools is unconstitutional because it has not provided for a thorough and efficient system of free schools and permits to exist discriminatory classifications in financing education resulting in unequal educational offerings.

2. The legislature must provide for a thorough and efficient system of education since each student is not being offered a high quality system of education, and they must take an active and direct role to ensure its constitutional duty is being performed.

3. The State Board of Education has the duty to determine educational policies of the state, subject to and in conformity with the Constitution and laws of the state. Therefore, the State Board must adopt high quality educational standards consistent with the thorough and efficient clause. It must also carry out its consititutional responsibility to supervise the schools by pursuing the implementation of high quality standards on a uniform and equitable basis to assure that every child is afforded high quality educational offerings.

4. All direct and indirect costs must be included in the state financing structure. The inequalities and inadequacies resulting from the use of excess levies to fund public education must be eliminated.

5. The State Board of Education has the duty to provide a grievance procedure and remedy at the state level for citizens to pursue grievances against county boards of education, superintendents and other administrative officials for failure to provide the elements of a high quality education that resources permit them to provide.[5]

The Court required that the entire system of education in West Virginia be completely revised and reconstructed. It directed that a master plan for

[5]Pauley et al. v. Bailey et al. Civil Number 75-1268 (Circuit Court, Kanawha County, WV) Filed May 11, 1982. (Commonly called the Recht Decision).

implementation of the decision be developed. On September 1, 1982, the Court held that a committee, including representatives of the State Department of Education, the plaintiffs, specialists for each curriculum area, and major educational groups be responsible to the State Board of Education for developing the master plan. In addition to high quality educational standards, the master plan was to include proposals for educational financing and proposals for facility construction.

At its September, 1982 meeting, the West Virginia Board of Education appointed a 99 member advisory committee composed of the groups defined by the Court, as well as 19 citizens at large. The committee was divided into three subcommittees: 1) educational standards, 2) school finance and 3) school facilities/ancillary services. The subcommittees met several times, often utilizing additional people. For example, the 44 member subcommittee on Standards was supplemented by 200 specialists, charged with developing research based standards. The full committee met three times and included a public hearing at one of its meetings. At its final meeting on December 1, 1982, the full committee received and modified the reports of the respective subcommittees and took action to finalize the recommendations to the State Board of Education.

Seventy (70) days from receiving its charge, the advisory committee presented its recommendations to the State Board of Education at its meeting on December 10, 1982. The Board reviewed these recommendations, making minor changes in its meeting on December 21, 1982, and submitted the final document to the Court on December 28, 1982. On March 4, 1983, the Circuit Court issued its final order in regard to the original Pauley v. Kelly case. The Court held that the West Virginia Master Plan for Public Education is a commendable document, shaped to the contours of its original decision. The Court found

that the Plan adopts a comprehensive description of high quality standards to establish a foundation for learning in West Virginia schools which may be construed as a recommendation to the legislature as an example of a thorough and efficient system of education. It is simply a road map to take public education in West Virginia from where it is today to where it must be when a high quality system of public education is provided.

With regard to financing of the public schools, the Court found that the Plan recognized the inequity permeating the entire finance structure resulting from the use of local excess levies. It provided funding mechanisms such as a school construction bond to provide high quality facilities and a statewide levy to provide an equitable distribution of the money generated to the county school districts.

THE MASTER PLAN

THE HEARTBEAT OF EXCELLENCE

The major purposes of the Plan are to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the public schools and to assure all public school students equal educational opportunities. Equal educational opportunities include, but are not limited to, comparably high quality programs of study, support programs, personnel, facilities, and instructional materials, supplies, and equipment.

The Plan provides that all educational programs and services required by a high quality education are available to all students. It identifies and describes the following elements of such a system of education:

1. high quality educational programs and services;
2. required administrative and instructional practices, personnel, facilities, and instructional materials, supplies and equipment to deliver such programs and services; and
3. accountability measures needed to assure the public that a thorough and efficient system of education is being provided students enrolled in the public schools of West Virginia.

The philosophy amplified by the Plan sets the tone for attaining excellence in education. The Plan is a realistic, dynamic, results and resource oriented document. As Secretary Bell said, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there. We have not known where we are going in American education and we will not be getting anywhere as a result."[6]

The Plan corrects that problem. It identifies what is to be achieved and clarifies roles and responsibilities. The state's role is to define what is to be delivered, assure that it is accomplished and build the capacity of those actually in charge to reach the outcomes prescribed in the Plan. The district's role is to deliver; and the legislative role is to fund a high quality system. The implication for the State Department of Education and county school districts is to adjust their organizational processes and systems to this structure.

EXPECTATIONS

Programs of study and learning outcomes form the premise on which future organizational activities, policies and actions should be based. Such activities, policies and actions can change everything except the expectations. Achieving the Plan's vision of excellence also required the establishment of a philosophy that places student performance into proper perspective to the resources required and the performance of teachers and administrators. Therefore, the Plan is premised on the philosophy that the business of education is learning. Learning is the end of the educational enterprise and therefore should be its focus. This attitude is an important first step in moving a system toward educational excellence. It forces principals, classroom teachers, school superintendents and school board members to be leaders of learning, because learning is the focus of excellent systems of education.

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[6]Address at the West Virginia Annual Superintendents' Conference, July, 1983.

At its July 8, 1984 meeting, the State Board reinforced this philosophy by declaring that improvements will have to be made to achieve a high quality educational system (Policy 2100). Such improvements should be governed by the guiding principle that each student has the opportunity to achieve mastery of state and county board approved learning outcomes. The establishment of high quality learning outcomes define the core values of educational offerings. These expectations - learning as a focus, mastery of learning outcomes - identify the State's educational value system. They determine what West Virginia education stands for and after 10 years what educators wish to look back upon with satisfaction. Figure 1 illustrates the parts of the system being adjusted to the State's new philosophy through implementation of the Plan.

The Plan provides a State framework to promote and assure educational improvement towards excellence in the public schools. It deals the educational enterprise as a system, not bits and pieces. It places at the center of that system the mastery of learning outcomes.

The expectations identified in the Plan allow clarity of purpose, maintainance of firm control and provision of maximum individual autonomy. Underlying these expectations are the assumptions that the pursuit of excellence must 1) have clear and relevant goals so student energy more often than not will be productively focused, 2) focus on teachers, students and learning outcomes; and the context that surrounds that critical triangle, 3) give teachers and administrators ways in which to change their schools, and 4) bring result-oriented information to the school as feedback so nothing will get far afield of the goal. These assumptions are addressed in the program definition, delivery and assurance sections of the Plan. A brief description of the contents of each section of the Plan and the progress being made towards their implementation follows.

Components Of The West Virginia
Master Plan For Public Education

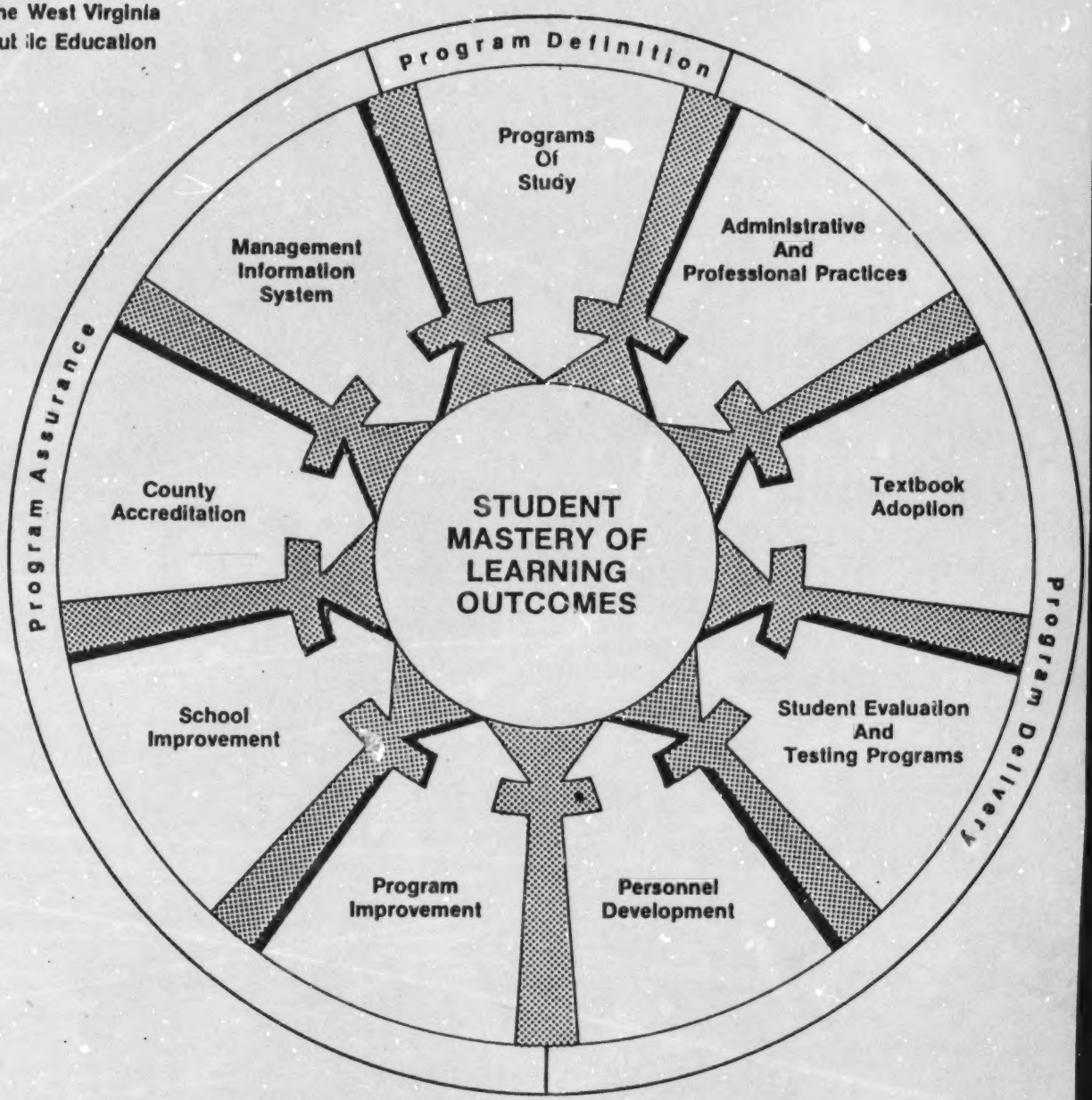

Figure 1

PROGRAM DEFINITION

Expectations and content are intertwined. Content expectations are defined in the programs of study required to be available to all students. A core curriculum required of each student is established insuring equity. But, each student also has the opportunity to pursue excellence in areas of their choosing. Chart I describes the required and elective offerings in high quality programs of study that must be available to each student to insure equity and excellence.

Embedded within each program of study are learning outcomes that drive the system. Together they provide a well articulated set of high quality learning experiences to work towards, measure performance against, and bring result oriented information to the schools as a major step in building bridges among principals and staff, superintendents and principals, and school boards and superintendents. These learning outcomes include the ability to read, write, reason, and compute; an understanding of the American government and economic systems; knowledge of the physical and biological scienes; and possession of personal habits that make for dependable, responsible and informed citizens.

The learning outcomes being used were developed by practicing classroom teachers, curriculum specialists and college professors, verified in pilot test counties by experienced teachers and recommended to the State Board of Education for adoption by a state level advisory council. In the first implementation year, counties will do a discrepancy analysis with their program and adjust their programs of study before the learning outcomes are delivered in classrooms throughout the state.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

Administrative and Instructional Practices - Reform of the processes of schooling is also a focus of the Plan. Administrative and professional

CHART I
(Adopted 5-11-84)

Programs of Study for a Thorough and Efficient System of Education in
Early Childhood Education, Middle Childhood Education, and Adolescent Education

NOTE: All assumptions (numbers) and footnotes (letters) appear in parentheses on this chart.

Programs of Study (1) (3) (4) / Programmatic Levels (2)	Early Childhood Education Levels K-4		Middle Childhood Education Levels 5-8		Adolescent Education Levels 9-12	
	Required	Elective	Required	Elective	Required (d)	Elective
Art	Art	-	Art	Exploratory Studies	(b)	• 1 offering: General Art • 1 offering: Art History/ Appreciation • 4 offerings: Studio Art (c)
Career Exploration	-	-	Career Exploration	Exploratory Studies	Career Exploration	• Career Exploration I & II
Computer Education	Computer Education	-	Computer Education	Exploratory Studies	Computer Education	• Computer Programming
Consumer & Homemaking	Consumer & Homemaking	-	Consumer & Homemaking	Exploratory Studies	(b)	• Surviving Today's Experiences & Problems Successfully • Adult Roles & Functions • 1 offering from each: Advanced Clothing, Consumer Education, Foods and Nutrition, Resource Management • Offerings from (o)
Developmental Guidance	Developmental Guidance (q)	-	Developmental Guidance (q)	Exploratory Studies	Developmental Guidance (q)	-

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CHART I (continued)
(Adopted 5-11-84)

Programs of Study (1) (3) (4) / Programmatic Levels (2)	Early Childhood Education Levels K-4		Middle Childhood Education Levels 5-8		Adolescent Education Levels 9-12	
	Required	Elective	Required	Elective	Required (d)	Elective
Driver Education	-	-	-	-		Driver Education
Foreign Languages Language (t)	Foreign Language (t)	-	Foreign Language (t)	Level 1 of 2	(b)	• Levels I, II, III & IV of two foreign languages • Special Topic • Level V of first language Levels II, III & IV of second language
Health	Health	-	Health	Exploratory Studies	Health	• 2 offerings
Industrial Arts	-	-	Industrial Arts	Exploratory Studies	(b)	• 3 offerings from: Communications, Construction, Manufacturing, Transportation
Language Arts	Language Arts	-	Language Arts	Exploratory Studies	English or Eng. & Speech	• 10 offerings (e)
Library/Media	Library/Media	-	Library/Media	Exploratory Studies	(s)	(s)
Mathematics	Math	Remedial Math	Math	Exploratory Studies • Remedial Math	Math (g)	• Algebra I & II, • Geometry, • Trigonometry, • General Math, • 2 offerings: Applied Math (g) • Pre-calculus

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CHART I (continued)
(Adopted 5-11-84)

Programs of Study (1) (3) (4) / Programmatic Levels (2)	Early Childhood Education Levels K-4		Middle Childhood Education Levels 5-8		Adolescent Education Levels 9-12	
	Required	Elective	Required	Elective	Required (d)	Elective
Music	Music	Instrumental Music-Strings	Music (r)	• Choral Music, • Instrumental Music - Winds and Percussion, • Instrumental Music - Strings • Exploratory Studies • Class Guitar (h) • Class Piano (h)	(b)	• Instr. Music - Winds and Percussion, • Choral Music, • Instrumental Music - Strings, • Music Literature • Class Guitar (h) • Class Piano (h)
Physical Education	Phy. Ed.	-	Phy. Ed.	Exploratory Studies	Phy. Ed.	• 1 offering: Lifetime Sports or Advanced Offerings (e.g., Gymnastics, Tumbling)
Reading	Reading & (f)	Remedial Reading	Reading & (f)	Exploratory Studies • Remedial Reading (i)	(f)	• Developmental Reading, • Remedial Reading (i) • Speed Reading • Advanced Study Skills
Safety	Bus/School Safety Add: Pedestrian, Bicycle, & Others	-	-	-	-	-
Science	Science	-	Science	Exploratory Studies	Biology	• General/ Physical Science, • Chemistry, • Physics • 1 offering each: General/Physical Sciences, Biological Sciences • Additional offerings (j)

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CHART I (continued)
(Adopted 5-11-84)

Programs of Study (1) (3) (4) / Programmatic Levels (2)	Early Childhood Education Levels K-4		Middle Childhood Education Levels 5-8		Adolescent Education Levels 5-12	
	Required	Elective	Required	Elective	Required (d)	Elective
Social Studies	Social Studies WV Studies (a)	-	Social Studies WV Studies (a)	Exploratory Studies	Social Studies Amer. His., World Cul., Economics, Cont. Amer. (k)	• 3 offerings (l)
Special Education - Gifted	-	• Intel. Gifted • Specific Academic Abilities Instruction • Visual and Performing Arts Instr.	-	• Intel. Gifted • Specific Academic Abilities Instruction • Visual and Performing Arts Instr.	-	• Intel. Gifted • Specific Academic Abilities Instruction • Visual and Performing Arts Instr.
- Other Categories of Exceptionality	-	• Provide Instr. to identified students as determined by IEP • Preschool Handicapped, All Categories	-	• Provide Instr. to identified students as determined by IEP	-	• Provide Instr. to identified students as determined by IEP (i) (m)
Typing	-	-	-	-	(b)	1 offering: Typing
Other Vocational Areas (n)	-	-	-	-	(b)	Offerings from 6 Service Areas (p)

Required Offerings - Required offerings are those areas of study which must be available and all students must complete.

Elective Offerings - Elective offerings are those areas of study which must be available and students may choose to study, based upon need and interest.

Assumptions

(1) Programs of study are further defined by (a) learning outcomes approved by the West Virginia Board of Education in accordance with Policy 2422.01 and (b) learning outcomes approved by county boards of education in accordance with their respective policies.

(2) Programmatic levels refer broadly to early childhood education, middle childhood education, and adolescent education. However, programmatic levels are subdivided into levels, e.g., K, 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., which represent the scope and sequence used to organize the learning outcomes within a program of study and its related areas of study.

(3) If the offerings of a program of study within Phase I are implemented, then the county school district begins to implement Phase II and so forth until a thorough and efficient system of education as defined by Phase III is implemented.

Footnotes

(a) In early childhood education learning outcomes for West Virginia Studies are included in the K, 1, 2, and 3 levels. In middle childhood education learning outcomes for West Virginia studies are included in Level 8, West Virginia Studies, and in American Government (See the West Virginia Board of Education approved Program of Study for Social Studies).

(b) At least one of the eight elective units for graduation shall be chosen from applied arts, fine or performing arts, or foreign language.

(c) Studio art electives may include but are not limited to these offerings: Drawing, Sculpture, Jewelry, Stage Design, Commercial Art, Painting, Printing/Graphics, Photography, Ceramics, Film/Television, Crafts, and Computer Art.

(d) Required programs of study at the adolescent education level until revised through the graduation requirement review process.

(e) Language Arts electives may include but are not limited to these offerings: Yearbook, Speech, Debate, Drama, Journalism, Creative Writing, Readers Theater, Mass Media, Library/Media, Newspaper, Literary Magazine, Forensics, Adolescent Fiction, Radio Drama, Play Production and Direction, Classics, Dramatics: Acting, Science Fiction, Classics in Film, Remedial Reading, Developmental Reading, Speed Reading, and Advanced Study Skills.

(f) Reading is included in all programs of study in terms of teaching reading in the content areas.

(g) No more than one unit of applied mathematics (business math, consumer math, vocational and technical math, and computer math) may be included in the two units.

(h) Class guitar and class piano may be offered any two consecutive years to students approximately 12-18 years of age, thus providing for sufficient physical/motor development prior to beginning these areas of study.

(i) Remedial reading and special education to be offered yearly to identified students.

(j) Science electives may include but are not limited to these offerings: Anatomy/Physiology, Botany, Advanced Physics, General Science, Microbiology, Zoology, Organic Chemistry, Chemistry II, and Ecology.

(k) These offerings are being phased in beginning with the freshman class of 1982-83.

(l) The required electives are chosen from Comparative Political Systems, Humanities, Psychology, Law and Legal Process, Issues in American History, Sociology, Anthropology and Future Studies. Additional electives may be offered.

(m) As specified by Regulations for the Education of Exceptional Students in West Virginia.

(n) Capacity to enroll 40-60% of students in grades 10-12 in Phase I and 60-80% of students in grades 10-12 in Phase II.

(o) Consumer/homemaking electives may include but are not limited to these offerings: Child Development, Housing, Prenatal and Infant Care, Family Health, Family Living, Home Furnishings, Crisis Education, and Family and Society.

(p) Vocational Service Areas are Business and Office, Diversified and Cooperative Training, Health Occupations, Industrial and Technical, Marketing and Distributive Education, Occupational Home Economics, and Vocational Agriculture.

(q) A program of study offered to students as an integral part of a comprehensive guidance program as defined in the Programmatic Definition for Guidance and Counseling approved by the West Virginia Board of Education.

(r) Seventh and eighth grade students are required to enroll in classroom/general music, band, chorus, or orchestra.

(s) Library/media is included in the Language Arts program of study.

(t) Learning outcomes for foreign language at the early childhood and middle childhood education levels must be offered as part of other programs of study.

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practices are identified to assist in the delivery of the learning outcomes and coordination and management of the instructional program at the building level. Beyond clearly identifying and agreeing upon the content, the Plan requires that:

1. time allocations for instruction should not be extremely different in the same content areas. Extreme differences probably indicate the substitution of individual preferences rather than school goals for time use. The Plan identifies instructional time and percentage bands of time schools allocate to each program (see Chart II as a sample). For example, physical education at the 1-4 levels should receive from three to five percent of the annual instructional time. This equals 10-12 minutes on a daily basis and annually about 1,200 minutes. Counties may deliver this time every day, two days a week, three days a week or any delivery system they desire as long as they meet the required percentage ranges. This tool allows principals and their staffs to assess the relationship between their use of instructional time and productivity, then add more time to low producing programs or maintain time in high producing programs. It also allows locally determined scheduling - daily, alternate days or even a six week concentration of time if they feel it is the best delivery model.
2. coordination of materials which can deliver the adopted content to support teaching and learning. Textbooks that are adopted by the state and counties must meet the criterion that they can deliver the learning outcomes.

CHART II

PERCENTAGE RANGE OF INSTRUCTION TIME
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (Grades 1-4)

GRADES 1-4	
PROGRAM AREA	PERCENTAGE RANGE OF INSTRUCTIONAL TIME
Language Arts and Reading	35 - 50%
Math	16 - 19%
Social Studies	5 - 7%
Health and Science	5 - 7%
Physical Education	3 - 5%
Art	3 - 5%
Music	3 - 5%
Discretionary Instructional Time may be used for: • Additional Learning Outcomes • Reinforcement Activities • Addressing Individual and Group Interests and Needs • Language Stimulation • Self-Help Skills	25 - 40%

3. test coordination and other student performance measures focus on instructional effects. Testing enables schools to keep before the public the inequity and the quality of public education. It lets students, their teachers and parents know what is expected of them and how well they are doing along the way. It provides those same teachers with tools to judge the performance of their students and need for remediation. The Plan requires both norm referenced tests to describe how students perform compared to students across the nation and learning outcome referenced tests providing benchmarks on the implementation of the core curriculum.

In a loosely coupled system, goal agreement, work related connections of teachers, efforts to evaluate performance and use the data to improve are rare. Through its administrative and professional practices, textbook adoptions and test programs, the Plan accepts and places into effect a tightly coupled instructional system.

The legislature has seen the value of tight coupling. It has financed a network of computer centers in each building connected to a state curriculum laboratory. When fully developed, teachers, at their initiation, can utilize the system on a daily basis to curricularly align objectives, materials and test items at their discretion in delivering programs. Further evidence of legislative support is found in funding the readoption of the State's norm referenced testing program and providing initial funding for the development of the learning outcome referenced testing program.

Personnel Development. The Plan addresses personnel development in three areas: teacher training programs, staff evaluation and incentive systems, and continuing staff development.

1. In regard to teacher education, the Plan states that before a candidate will be licensed in the State of West Virginia, colleges must be able to answer three questions:

   a. Can the candidate read, write and compute at a level society determines is effective?

   b. Does the candidate know the content to be taught in the public schools?

   c. Can the candidate demonstrate the use of methodology to put the content into practice?

   These three questions are the components of an outcome based teacher preparation model being implemented (State Board Policy 5100). Its unique contribution is that it identifies the public school curriculum as the basis for content expectations of preparation programs. Policy 5100 assumes that teacher training programs will be improved when 1) teachers are able to deliver the state approved learning outcomes, 2) the public school curriculum drives preparation programs, and 3) educational program advisory councils composed of the institution, public teachers, and school and State Department staff are established to advise college faculties in program review and improvement activities.

   The program has been accepted by the colleges and universities and the legislature. Funding has been received to develop the 30 tests required to implement the program. The policy has full effect for students entering the class of 1985.

2. In regard to evaluation and incentives, the Plan requires that higher pay be the first step in retaining teachers who perform

well. To this effect, the state has financed the first year of a three year implementation plan to equalize salaries (within 5%) across the state. It is anticipated that future legislatures will continue this program.

The second step requires a statewide staff evaluation/incentive system be established to remove incompetent employees and reward employees who perform well. A statewide task force, composed of representatives of the major organizations, is currently working on the plan and will present its recommendations to the State Board of Education in July, 1984. It is anticipated that the criteria used in the teacher evaluation system and to some extent the principal's evaluation system, will be based upon practices highly correlated to student achievement of learning outcomes.

3. The Plan recognizes that for excellence to be achieved not only must personnel be paid well, but current teachers' and principals' capacity to excel must be assisted. Therefore, the Plan also focuses on staff development. Currently, each professional must attend 18 hours of continuing education each year. This requirement was retained but adds that 12 of the hours must be job related. Job related means that programs available to all teachers are directly relevant to: a) the programs of study they are currently teaching; b) the teaching strategies appropriate to that curriculum; c) classroom management skills; d) techniques appropriate for learners with various exceptionalities and learning styles; e) alignment of learning outcomes to instructional strategies, materials and resources; and f) student and program evaluation.

The Plan further emphasizes the development of committed leadership for learning. It places in the hands of school principals an aggressive instructional management system with which to bring about improvements in learning, and even identifies the instructional management role they are to play if their schools are to achieve excellence. Yet, many people feel that a major barrier to becoming a more effective principal is the lack of training and experience in classroom instruction which limits their credibility. They contend that without a mastery of curriculum content and teaching methodologies principals have a difficult time to assert themselves as instructional leaders.

The Plan addresses this area. It places in the hands of principals tools needed to become champions of learning: a school improvement process, a staff evaluation system, a time allocation system and a staff development system. The legislature has recognized the importance of the instructional management role by establishing a Principal's Academy. It will begin implementation the summer of 1984. The Academy attempts to build the capacity of the principal to facilitate the main business of the school: teaching and learning. This capacity building vehicle is designed to help them master curriculum content and use the Plan's tools so they can assert themselves as instructional leaders and to get their staffs from where they are to where they want to be.

PROGRAM ASSURANCE

The State is responsible to assure the public that a high quality program is being delivered. The Plan identifies program improvement, school improvement, county accreditation and a statewide management information system as tools districts use to move towards excellence. The State can use information gathered from these systems to determine the speed by which excellence is being achieved, and weaknesses in programs to be corrected

through their technical assistance and leadership roles. Counties and schools can use the data to be constantly engaged in the process of self-renewal.

1. Program improvement processes are established by which counties review their programs, K-12, make recommendation for improvement priorities and staff development activities. The process requires advisory councils for general, special, vocational and support services.
2. School improvement processes are established by which the school principal and their staff assess needs, establish annual program and school improvement priorities and staff development recommendations. The process requires school advisory councils.
3. Accountability is addressed by county accreditation and school evaluation and classification. All laws and State Board policies are monitored for compliance. Those compliance items that are not met must have improvement components identified to rectify them within a year.
4. The Plan establishes a statewide management information system. The system is to be designed to combine all present data systems with those new systems to monitor the Plan. Chief among the reports of this educational information system will be those portraying trends and profiles--levels of achievement for various indicators over time--at building, county, and state levels to monitor the implementation of the Plan and provide data to school principals and county superintendents and staff and the state board of education on the effectiveness of schooling in West Virginia. The educational information system is to be designed to facilitate school improvement by giving decision-makers

concise, accurate and timely information on the school characteristics, processes and performances needed by them at whatever level they operate.

THE WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL

MOVING TOWARDS EXCELLENCE

Policies designed to achieve excellence must equate in the classroom. A plan is one thing; moving from paper to practice is quite another. There is evidence that the legislature and the State Board of Education are meeting the challenge.

On March 15, 1984, the West Virginia legislature:

1. changed wording in state statutes from requiring the State Board of Education to develop minimum standards to requirement for the development of high quality standards.
2. placed before the people two constitutional amendments. The school construction is designed to facility equity across all counties in the state. A second amendment provides for a statewide excess levy providing funds to implement the high quality standards, provide program equity and move toward excellence for all students, schools and districts.
3. moved on the first step of a three-year implementation process to equalize salaries of all personnel within the State of West Virginia so that teachers in every county would be within a five percent pay range of each other providing salary equity.

At its May, 1984 meeting, the State Board of Education approved Policy 2510 which describes high quality programs of study and required personnel, facilities and equipment, materials and supplies to be provided to every child in the State of West Virginia. It allows for a local determination of priorities sequenced over three phases.

The policy is a leadership document that projects the instructional changes to move West Virginia education towards excellence over the next five years. The major purposes of this policy is to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the public schools and assure all public school students equal educational opportunities. Policy 2510 provides a framework to deliver a high quality education by requiring county boards of education to establish policies and implement written procedures that:

A. Effective 1984-85

1. define programs of study that should be available to all students in 1984-85 and thereafter. Counties will establish their implementation priorities;
2. assure that counties operate a comprehensive system of staff development; and
3. assure that classrooms built after July 1, 1983, meet standards found in the Handbook on Planning School Facilities.

B. Effective 1985-86

1. assure that principals are responsible for instructional management;
2. assure that instructional time is utilized efficiently;
3. assure that curricula at the county and school levels are based upon the programs of study and learning outcomes approved by the West Virginia Board of Education; and
4. assure that county education programs are annually reviewed and priorities for improvement are recommended to the county superintendent.

C. Effective 1986-87

1. develop an instructional management system which increases student learning and maximizes student time on task;
2. develop a classroom management system that fosters a climate conducive to student learning; and
3. assure that schools annually assess their needs and recommend priorities to their superintendent.

D. Effective 1988-89

1. assure that the county, each school and each teacher has a system to monitor student progress; and
2. assure that the county participates in a state level management information system.

FROM PAPER TO PRACTICE

The West Virginia school improvement strategy embodied in Policy 2510 involves three components working in relationship to each other to move from excellence on paper as described in the Plan to excellence in practice as described in the everyday working operation of the public schools (see Figure 2). Those components are:

1. a shared top down definition of excellence, including the programs of study and services to be delivered;
2. a bottom up improvement process by which that definition can be assessed by:
   a. a program improvement process where programs are assessed against the definition and priorities for program and staff improvement are established,
   b. a school improvement process where the principal and staff at each building assess themselves against the definition and

THE WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT MODEL

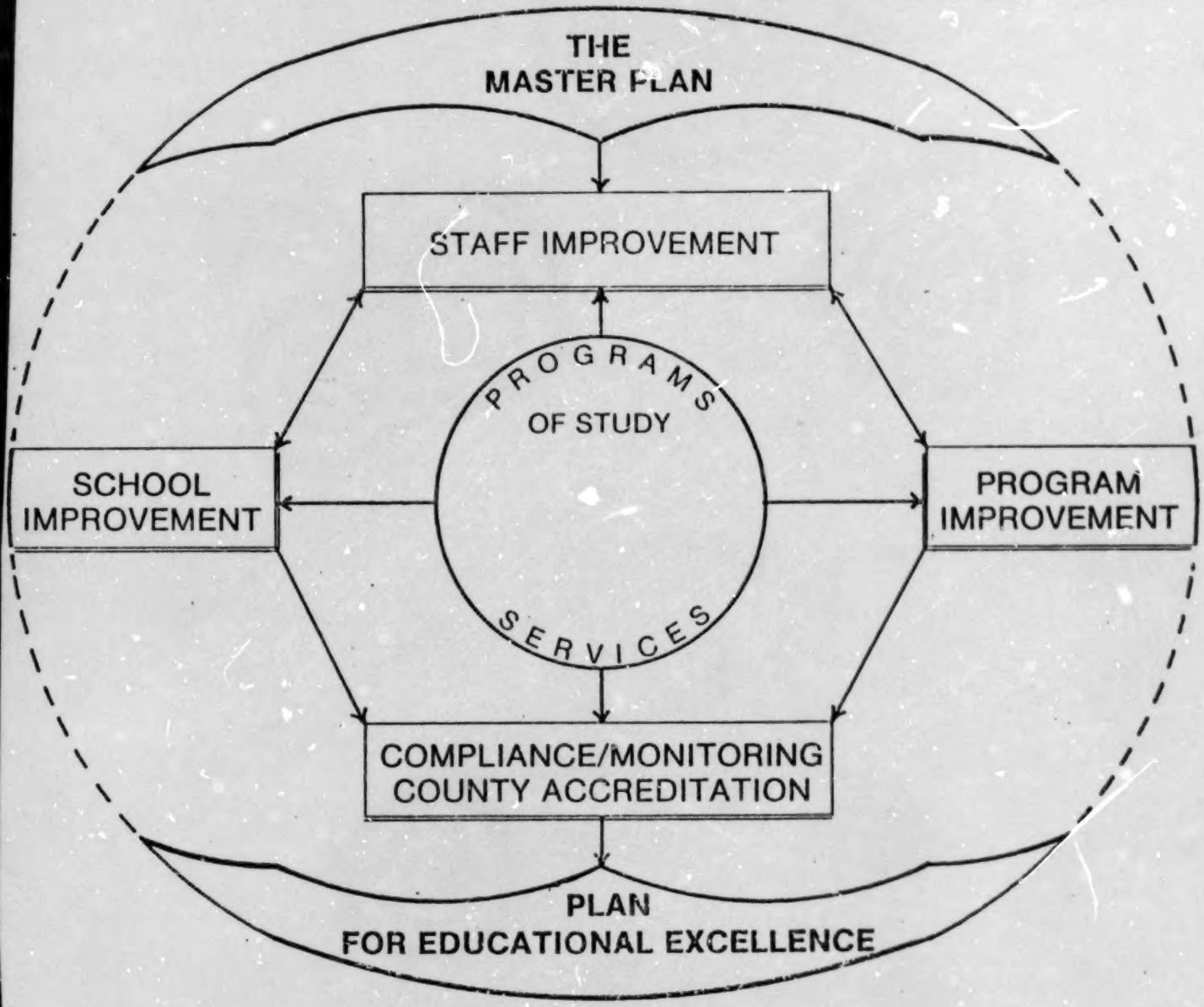

Figure 2

establish program and school priorities for improvement as well as recommendations for staff improvement and continuing development, and

c. a staff improvement process whereby staff improvement recommendations to implement programs and improve schools are turned into job related developmental activities.

3. an accountability system through which the definition can be monitored and counties can report annual improvement priorities.

Policy 2510 places these components in relationship to each other as seen in Figure 2 and allows counties to pace and prioritize the implementation of the high quality standards according to the availability of funding, thus insuring local decision making.

LOCAL DYNAMICS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The school improvement model is conceived to bring the professional and public educational community together; develop a sense of shared values; and over time provide equal educational opportunities. It gives people the freedom to work towards their objectives and requires small steps in an absence of overplanning. From this point of view, latitude to adapt new policies to local circumstances and develop home grown solutions exists. It emphasizes the importance of local prioritization and focusing on the entire system.

In the model, building and county level decision making are important concepts in the Plan's implementation. Circumstances among schools vary considerably. Students and staff vary. If a sensible fit between new practices and the ongoing life of a school is to occur in ways that enhance professionalism, motivation and the school's commitment to excellence, the latitude to adapt must be provided. Establishing consensus at the school

level involves assessing current conditions and programs, identifying key areas for improvement, developing plans to make those improvements, implementing the plans and evaluating the success of the implementation focus action planning at the building and county level.

The model also emphasizes the systems approach to improve schooling. It assumes that meaningful change must address instruction, curriculum, organizational dynamics and community involvement in an integrated way. Its most important focus is the development of a supportive culture for excellence by involving everyone from top to the bottom in planning and decision making. It can be a be a tedious process, but in the end the whole group should benefit because members become aligned behind common goals. As such a supportive culture develops, change will be viewed as positive and all change is within the context of the goal being pursued - excellence.

THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S ROLE IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Prior to 1980, the technological view was the dominate change process used by the Department. Currently, regulatory models are being stressed. However, the Department is aggressively incorporating cybernetic and linkage components. The models are not mutually exclusive. In fact, with the incorporation of these models, state department staff function as internal auditors and builders of local educator's capacity to implement the vision of excellence. They sample the quality of schools according to research based standards. They feed the data back to school staffs, fostering their capacity to make decisions about program, school and staff improvement priorities.

The four change strategies are briefly summarized. In the technological view of change innovative materials and programs are developed and shared with others. Research data is collected on these programs. If the results are significant, the program is made available to the public schools. The

assumption being that good innovative materials and information about sound practices will be employed voluntarily by school systems. This model assumes that the best way to improve educational practice is to adopt a new program that seems to address a particular problem. The weakness of this paradigm is that it produces either results that cannot be used because of their invalidity, or if valid take too long to be timely.

Currently, a regulatory process is used in which laws, policies and regulations are monitored. This process is based on the assumption that if laws, policies and regulations are enacted, they should be followed. If the programs are mandated they should be in place. Although local staff may seek outside help in implementing a program, the major Department program assistance consists of explaining regulations and using monitoring procedures to ensure their implementation. In West Virginia, this regulatory view is found in the accountability processes built into the implementation procedures for the Plan. It requires a county accreditation system in which all policies and laws are monitored for compliance. For those items out of compliance, counties must provide two types of information in their improvement plans. First, they must demonstrate how they will come into compliance within a year for those standards identified through the monitoring. And, secondly, they must identify priorities for improvement after considering recommendations from the school and program improvement processes and the funds to support their efforts towards excellence.

William W. Cooley, in his presidential address to the American Education Research Association, April, 1983, proposed a little used cybernetic paradigm to improve the performance of the educational system.[7] This third change

[7]William W. Cooley. "Improving the Performance of an Educational System," Educational Researcher. (June/July 1983), pp. 4-12.

strategy involves developing and monitoring a variety of performance indicators. When an indicator moves into an unacceptable range, corrective action is focused and taken. This model assumes that significant improvements can be made through fine tuning the system rather than trying to solve problems in isolation. It requires a continuous activity of data collection and analysis followed by the negotiation of a set of correctives tailoring specific interventions to improve educational practice. These correctives may very well be innovations verified as in the technological model. The difference is that they are applied as a specific corrective rather than in a shotgun manner. Again, this demonstrates the interdependency of the change strategies and their ability to be used in conjunction with each other. Supporting this change strategy is the Plan's requirement for a statewide management information system. Once completed, it will allow Department staff to monitor the indicators, establish data produced standards, and take corrective action where applicable. Secondly, it will allow counties to monitor indicators and help in establishing priorities for improving their system. Chart III provides an example of the potential use of trend data by principals, directors and superintendents to improve the performance of their system.

A fourth change strategy is the linkage model which is activated when the needs and problems requiring information and assistance are identified. The major feature of this model is the involvement of the linking agent. A Department team or staff member can assist the local school or district in the improvement process by understanding local internal processes and conditions that characterize the system, helping foster conditions amenable to change and linking local staffs to appropriate resources. As the Department's assistance role matures, this linkage model can be incorporated with the regulatory, cybernetic and technological models to become the dominant interaction with counties for school and program improvement.

CHART III

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

TREND ANALYSIS OF THE FULL SERVICE INDICATOR "PERCENT OF SCHOOL AGE POPULATION RECEIVING A FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION"

Type of Exceptionality		YEARS 79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	Estimated Full Service Level		Present Level 83-84		Target Level 84-85
Communication Disorders	*Number Served*	50	75	80	85	95	140	(–)	95	➡	+45
	% School Pop.	1.0%	1.5%	1.6%	1.7%	1.9%	2.8%		1.9%		+0.9%

PROBLEMS/NEEDS	GOALS 84-85	POSSIBLE STRATEGIES
1. Forty-five (45) new students have been identified as communication disordered and will need speech-language services during 1984-85 2. Caseloads of present staff exceed maximum permissible in the state regulations	1. Provide speech-language services for newly identified students 2. Comply with state regulations by reducing caseloads	1. Employ 2 new speech-language pathologists

Type of Exceptionality		YEARS 79-80	80-81	81-82	82-83	83-84	Estimated Full Service Level		Present Level 83-84		Target Level 84-85
Specific Learning Disabilities	*Number Served*	100	150	200	250	300	200	(–)	300	➡	*
	% School Pop.	2.0%	3.0%	4.0%	5.0%	6.0%	4.0%		6.0%		*

*Undetermined

PROBLEMS/NEEDS	GOALS 84-85	POSSIBLE STRATEGIES
1. Program growth has exceeded full service projections 2. Teacher referrals have dramatically increased during 1983-84	1. Determine if program practices are inappropriately identifying and placing students in the SLD program	1. Examine SLD identifications and evaluation practices 2. Examine SLD procedures for determining eligibility 3. Review remedial alternatives for students who are not eligible for the program

DATA SOURCE: Second Month Report

SUMMARY

This paper has presented West Virginia's strategy to improve schooling. It has explained the theoretical and legal underpinnings of the State's Master Plan for Educational Excellence. And finally, it described local and State roles in moving the Plan from paper to practice.

Central to improving schooling in West Virginia is the development of shared values through increased collegiality and continuous progress. School improvement and program improvement are processes to create such a system of values. They are conceived as long-term processes. No magic wand will be waved across the State of West Virginia resulting in an equal opportunity for a high quality education for all its children. It will be more like the Chinese water torture, year after year; the drip-drip-drip-drip of school improvement - progress not perfection.

The school improvement processes described herein requires 1) principal and staff assessment against a shared top down definition of excellence described in Policy 2510, 2) the development of school priorities for improvement and submitting those to their county boards of education, and 3) county prioritization of improvements and utilization of local and state funds to create the drip-drip-drip-drip of progress towards an excellent education for every child. If funding increases, the process moves rapidly. If funding is stable, the process moves slowly. Either way, West Virginia's educational system will move towards excellence!

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